Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

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"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."
JOHN HAY.

On Picket Duty.

Liberty's publication office has been removed from 120 Liberty Street to 24 Gold Street.

The American jingoes do not believe that patriotism is the *last* refuge of the scoundrel. They find it a convenient refuge first, last, and all the time.

The editor of the "Woman's Journal," the organ of the suffragists, declares that the only permanent political reform is "the extension of suffrage to educated, responsible, public-spirited women, made to be the political helpmeets of men." To support this, he cites a dictum of Lucy Stone to the effect that "there is only one name under heaven whereby America can be saved politically, and that name is 'woman.'" But, if woman can do what man has utterly failed to do, she certainly was made to be more than his political "helpmeet"; she must be far superior to him. This, in fact, is what the majority of woman-suffragists claim. Mrs. Dietrick's infant-and-walk plea finds little sympathy among her sister agitators.

Mr. J. T. Small, of Provincetown, Mass., writes me as follows: "Isn't there a chance for a 'sermon' on the cowardice and hypocrisy of society in the way they are hustling Wilde's books out of the public libraries? If they ever possessed any value, how is it possible for that value to be removed by the tumbling from his throne of the man who wrote them? And, if they did not possess value, then the trustees of the libraries have been wasting the people's money in the purchase of books simply because Wilde had established a name for himself. Or, in other words, they have been guilty of buying books merely on account of a name; and, now that the owner of the name has been hustled out of society, his books must also be hustled out of the libraries." There would have been "a chance for a sermon," if Mr. Small had not exhausted it by his pithy remarks.

Wherever intelligent women seriously discuss marriage, they sadly admit the failure of the sacred institution. The reception of the Rev. Miss Shaw's startling remark about the hollowness of marriage has been commented on in these columns recently. Now I find another significant fact of the same character in a report of a Sorosis meeting. Mrs. Lozier, in the course of her defence of George Eliot's title to rank among the literary immortals, said: "She looks upon marriage, as some one has said, 'as good discipline.' She has depicted some happy marriages, but only a few, because she didn't know of very many — we don't ourselves." The reporter tells us that there was a general laugh at this unexpected observation; but the laugh was not in derision, it is safe to wager. The fashionable ladies of Sorosis know more about marriage than the ignorant, canting editors who have constituted themselves guardians of the sacred institution.

I most earnestly urge every reader of this paper to give his most serious and careful and thoughtful attention to Mr. Hugo Bilgram's review of Mr. Arthur Kitson's new book on money. Mr. Bilgram has written it at my especial request. I made the request because I consider it important to demolish the most specious plea that has yet appeared, or that is likely to appear, for the puerile notion that a monetary system is possible without a standard of value. It often happens that some of the most active men in a movement are not its most rational exponents. The movement for freedom in finance is an instance of this truth. Two or three of its most enthusiastic propagandists are basing their advocacy upon propositions regarding value and its measurement which are so absurd that I have to blush for the rational utterances which I find in their company. If I were interested in some great discovery in mechanics, and if others interested with me were to persist in bringing it into ridicule by associating it with, and even basing it upon, a professed solution of the perpetual motion problem, I could not feel a deeper sense of humiliation for my cause than I feel when I receive a new book, written by an earnest comrade, in which the social ends that I seek are defended on grounds so laughably untenable that they give rational men a warrant for entertaining a suspicion of our sanity. Such a book is Mr. Kitson's, which, in asking for freedom in finance for the purpose of creating a monetary system professing to estimate concrete values in the terms of a valueless abstraction, is liable to do more harm to the cause of financial freedom than all the writings of the orthodox economists. It may seem that, in calling upon one of the ablest living writers on finance to expose an error so childish, I have trained a columbiad upon an egg-shell. Yet, after all, one is seldom set a more difficult task than that of dealing with those forms of error which fly in one's face with a flat and fatuous denial of truths so nearly axiomatic that they do not admit of much elucidation. Of this task Mr. Bilgram has acquitted himself triumphantly. Mr. Kitson's theory of an invariable monetary unit is riddled completely. If Mr. Kitson will set himself to answer the question asked him by Mr. Bilgram regarding the value, in terms of the invariable unit, of several commodities assumed to have certain exchange relations on the day following the adoption of this unit, he will begin to appreciate the difficulties of his situation. I would like him to deal also with a problem of somewhat similar character which I will set him. Suppose that today, April 20, 1895, Mr. Kitson's monetary system goes into operation. Suppose, further, that, in his preliminary tabulation of the exchange relations of commodities as existing on April 20, he finds that 48 ounces of silver = 1 ounce of gold = 200 ounces of copper; and that he takes 1 ounce of gold, at its valuation of April 20, as his invariable unit. A year elapses. On April 20, 1896, the exchange relations of silver, gold, and copper, in consequence of variations in the supply and demand of these commodities, are found, we will suppose, to be as follows: 48 ounces of silver = 3 ounces of gold = 300 ounces of copper. Now let us leave copper out of consideration for a moment. If on April 20, 1895, when 48 ounces of silver were worth 1 ounce of gold, 1 ounce of gold was worth 1 unit, then on April 20, 1896, when 48 ounces of silver are worth 3 ounces of gold, 1 ounce of gold is worth $\frac{1}{3}$ of a unit. So far, so good. Now let us take copper into consideration once more, but leave out silver. If on April 20, 1895, when 200 ounces of copper were worth 1 ounce of gold, 1 ounce of gold was worth 1 unit, then on April 20, 1896, when 200 ounces of copper are worth 2 ounces of gold, 1 ounce of gold is worth $\frac{1}{2}$ of a unit. But we have just proved it to be worth $\frac{1}{3}$ of a unit. That is to say, starting with the same data and following two parallel and irrefutable lines of argument, we arrive at contradictory conclusions. And, by taking other commodities into account and applying the same argument in each case, it could be shown that, with Mr. Kitson's "invariable" unit, an ounce of gold at any given moment would have a thousand and one different values, all expressed in terms of the same unit or denominator. In dealing thus severely with Mr. Kitson's book, I am moved by no unfriendly spirit, and I have no inclination to deny that it contains much valuable truth, — truth that would be of great service to liberty were it not "queered" by pages of intolerable balderdash. I would like the work to be read by every person who has previously familiarized himself with the literature of free and mutual banking. But no work could be better calculated to fill the mind of a beginner with confusion and that of a keen opponent with contempt. For this reason I cannot include it — much to my regret — in the literature of Liberty's propaganda.

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"In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestiges of old-time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke the sword of the executioner, the seal of the magistrate, the club of the policeman, the gauge of the exciseman, the erasing-knife of the department clerk, all those insignia of Politics, which young Liberty grinds beneath her heel." — PROUDHON.

☞ The appearance in the editorial column of articles over other signatures than the editor's initial indicates that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience.

A New Book on Money.

Among the numerous books and essays on money there are few in which an attempt is made to submit the subject to a logical treatment. They are, as a rule, nothing more than compilations of incoherent and often contradictory assertions presented without logical sequence. One of the exceptions to this rule is the recent publication, "A Scientific Solution of the Money Question," by Arthur Kitson, in which it is clearly shown, by a lucid line of reasoning, that the prevailing injustice of the distribution of wealth is intimately related to that economic condition which enables individuals to acquire wealth without rendering any personal service in return, the principal forms of such acquisition being rent and interest. The author (p. 360) correctly attributes interest to a restricted currency, and shows (p. 310) that interest, instead of being an inducement to industry, as claimed by most economic writers, really invites to idleness, and, by leading men away from the field of production and making them non-producers, leads to hereditary pauperism. He attributes (p. 270) financial panics to a restricted currency, and contends (VII) that "the money question is the key to all the various other social questions which are now subjects of so much agitation and political discussion."

But, while on fundamental principles he occupies a most advanced standpoint, it is sincerely to be regretted that in his theory of the value of money he has embraced a most pernicious doctrine.

Most writers on money still adhere to the fallacy that the value of the money unit depends, among other factors, on the number of such units in circulation, and, although many of them disavow the logical inference that money would have an exchange value independent of the value of the commodities of which it is made, — a value which may be imparted by legislation or some other occult power, — a conviction to that effect has, notwithstanding this disavowal, obtained such a firm foothold in public opinion, apparently confirmed by the misunderstood effect of our credit-money system, that it is likely to be one of the most serious obstacles to the introduction of a rational money system. The notion that the purchasing power of the dollar can be conceived independently of a definite quantity of a definite commodity has appeared in numerous forms, and Mr. Kitson has simply presented it in a new dress, claiming that an invariable value denominator can be established that shall be independent of any specific commodity.

If a money system were to be inaugurated on the lines indicated by him, failure would be a foregone conclusion. For this reason it is deemed important to devote to a review of Mr. Kitson's book so much space in these columns as is necessary to show in what particulars he has not exercised sufficient discretion in accepting the doctrines of those writers who, in the attempt to defend the present distribution of wealth, have found it necessary to resort to all kinds of reasoning.

The critique will be preceded by a brief extract, consisting of practically verbal quotations. The accompanying numbers refer to pages.

(118) Value is not expressed or defined by a single thing. Two quantities are necessary to express value. The correct definition of value is the exchange relationship existing between two commodities, and is expressed by the ratio in which the two quantities exchange. (123) No single thing can be a standard of value. (128) No substance can measure values. (129) Values, being relations or ratios, cannot be expressed by any substance. (133) Suppose one horse exchanged for ten ounces of gold, and one mule for one ounce, then the value of horses to mules is as ten to one. It is, therefore, not the gold that expresses the value, but the ratio of the number of ounces. It is obvious that the function here served by gold can be served by anything else, provided it is exchangeable. If one horse exchanged for 300 bushels of wheat and one mule for 30 bushels, the value of horses to mules is then expressed, not in terms of wheat, but by the numbers 300 : 30. (134) Given a horse, a mule, and a definite quantity of gold, it is required to find the value of horses in terms of mules. It is safe to say that no economist has yet been discovered capable of solving this problem. (135) When it was found that commodities would exchange for certain weights of gold, it was extremely easy and convenient to express the values in commodities, using gold merely as arithmetic. But, having once accomplished this, gold became no longer necessary. The language of commodities was created as soon as their relationship was ascertained in terms of the quantities of any one commodity, whether gold, silver, wheat, or what not; and, if from that instant prices had been reckoned without retaining the standard commodity for successive comparisons and valuations, we should have had an absolute method by which the variations in prices of each and every commodity would have been correctly registered, including the variations in the standard commodity itself. (137) Any commodity may be used for arranging prices at any particular time, so long as its exchange relation with all others is known. An absolute, invariable unit, in terms of which prices may be ranged, can be obtained by prizing commodities in terms of some particular one at a certain time and never afterwards. For instance, if gold was taken as a standard commodity on December 31, 1894, and the so-called "standard of value" immediately abolished, the value of commodities would all be expressed in numbers which represented so many grains of gold on that particular day. No matter how gold might fluctuate thereafter, it could not possibly affect the prices of other commodities. Its own fluctuations would be registered in money based upon such a system. (138) The question at issue may thus be stated: "Is value the property or quality of commodities, or is it merely an abstract relation between them?" (151) Let us now suppose that gold and silver were unknown to our imaginary community. The inventor hits upon this plan. He first finds the proportion in which all the various products stand to each other. (152) He then tabulates all commodities in their exchange relation thus: 20 bushels of corn = 20 gallons of wine = 1 sheep = 10 yards of cloth. By dividing their least common multiple by each number respectively, we find their value-relation: Corn = 1; wine = 1; sheep = 20; cloth = 2. By taking the integer one as a unit, commodities can be ranged thus: 1 bushel of corn = 1 unit of purchasing power; 1 sheep = 20 units, etc, at this particular time and place. Taking this unit, our inventor would suggest the printing, on paper, single units and multiples representing such purchasing power. (153) Here we have the true and scientific form of money. The medium of exchange is not a commodity. The exchange of corn for so many arbitrary units expressed on pieces of paper is not the exchange of one commodity for another, but for a right or power to demand commodities at any future time. The only requisite that such notes need to constitute money is that the members of the community shall agree to accept them from each other in exchange for products. (154) Being socially recognized and acceptable, and expressed in terms in which the purchasing power of all commodities are commensurable, this paper serves as a means of expressing values, and is, therefore, strictly and scientifically speaking, money. (155) The true nature of money is now apparent. It is simply a right or title to demand some product or service from some one else. Money is, therefore, what is termed credit. The transaction known as selling is not a barter nor a complete exchange transaction. It is what is termed a demi-exchange. The exchange is but half completed; it is only completed when we have purchased what we need with the money. (156) The medium of exchange must be absolutely invariable, since it must express accurately the exchange relations. A variable medium cannot possibly do this, and, as all exchangeable commodities are variable, no commodity can, scientifically speaking, constitute a medium of exchange. (164) Legislators declare money to be a commodity; science says it is not and cannot be. (178) Suppose we regard the term dollar as the equivalent of the purchasing power of one ounce of silver at the time this price list was arranged, but make it in no wise dependent upon the commodity silver thereafter; the dollar becomes an absolutely invariable unit of purchasing power, — *viz.*, the equivalent of that power which happened to be attached to an ounce of silver at one particular time and place. And, no matter how silver may fluctuate thereafter, it cannot affect the purchasing power of this ideal unit, the dollar.

The argument leading to these remarkable conclusions is opened with a discourse on the correct definition of the word value. The popular conception — *viz.*, "that which a thing will bring in the market" — is disputed, and the abstract ratio definition presented as the only correct one. Here already the author follows in the footsteps of those who mistake dogmatism for science. Considering that words are mere tools for transmitting thoughts, every one is free to use them in any sense he chooses, provided he removes ambiguity by a sharp, clear-cut definition and uses the word consistently as defined. Had Mr. Kitson done so, no fault could be found with his definition. It is, however, seldom advisable to give a new meaning to a word to which a definite meaning is already attached, because this is liable to confuse the reader. Now, it happens that the word value is used in mathematics as a synonym of "equivalent," or "that which is equal to," and this is also the popular conception attached to the word when employed in a definite sense. It is also used in an indefinite sense, as when it is said that a thing possesses value, which means that the thing is capable of being exchanged with, and thereby made an equivalent of, other economic quantities. In algebra we speak of "substituting for *x* its value."

If A : B = 3 : 4 (= ¾), then ¾ is the value of the ratio A : B. But, if the same equation is written thus: A = ¾ B, then it is said that ¾ B is the value of A. A is then rendered in terms of B, the coefficient ¾ being the numerical value, the ratio, and B the denominator, or unit. If in these equations A and B are concrete quantities, such as weight, length, force, etc., it is necessary that they be homogeneous; otherwise, the equations would be impossible, absurd. The first equation shows that a ratio of two homogeneous quantities has necessarily an abstract value. The second equation shows that the value of a concrete quantity (A) is necessarily another concrete quantity (¾ B) of a homogeneous nature.

Mr. Kitson is so accustomed to the mathematical conception of the word value that, with only a few exceptions, he uses it in the sense he repudiates. When he speaks of the "value of horses to mules" (133), he uses the word in the sense of a ratio. But, when he refers to "the value of horses in terms of mules" (134), he uses it in a concrete sense; he has in mind no longer the first, but the second, form of the above equations, since any quantity expressed in terms of a concrete magnitude is of a concrete nature. Abstract numbers require no concrete denominators, and it can hardly be denied that a mule is a concrete quantity. The concrete sense is implied when he admits that values can be expressed in terms of gold (135), that notes and coin can have value (218), that value arises only where scarcity exists (224), that the dollar is the common denominator of values (264), etc. Surely, if it comes so naturally to our friend to speak of values as of concrete quantities, while his statements assume a very unusual form whenever he uses the word consistently with the "orthodox" definition of the economists, he would find it to his advantage to abandon this definition, which economic writers lay down, but *never** use, — a fact which was clearly recognized by Mr. Kitson (117) and which should have warned him to think twice before jumping.

He commits a similar mistake when he re-echoes Macleod's assertion that value is no intrinsic property or quality of goods (125, 134). The arguments advanced by that writer are equally applicable to prove that matter can have no intrinsic property whatever. As a matter of fact, if weight is an intrinsic property of matter, so is exchange value (exchange capacity). And, *vice versa*, if value is not an economic property of goods, then weight is not a physical property of matter. We speak of matter possessing a certain property if it is capable of producing, under certain conditions, a certain sensible effect. We can conceive the weight of a body only by placing it in a condition in which gravitation can produce a sensible effect. We take it in our hands to judge its weight, or place it on a scale to measure it. So we can conceive and measure the exchange value of a thing only by placing it on the market and observing for what quantity of other goods it will exchange. The impossibility of finding the weight of a body without performing any of the processes by which the effect of weight is rendered sensible would not justify the conclusion that the object has no weight. Nor is it rational to deny that exchange value is an attribute of goods, because an economist is unable to tell the respective exchange relations of a horse, a mule, and a definite quantity of gold, without making the necessary analysis, which consists in placing them on the market and observing the rate at which they exchange. Things are economically homogeneous and are said to possess value if they possess purchasing power. They are economically equal if they exchange evenly, or if both exchange for an identical third quantity. And if the equality, in an economic sense, of two things is admitted (152), then the one is the equivalent or the value of the other.

We now approach the point where our author makes a serious slip. With some reservations it can be admitted that the function served by gold in finding the value of horses in terms of mules can be served by anything else, provided it is exchangeable (133), and that gold will disappear in the final result: 1 horse = 10 mules. But it is a fatal error to conclude that a quantity economically heterogeneous to horses and mules, such as an abstract number or an ideal unit, could have taken the place of gold. To obtain the ratio of the weight of two bodies, it is immaterial whether their weight is first found in terms of grains, pounds, or tons. In the final ratio the temporary unit will disappear. But it would be an error to imagine that for this reason the weights might originally have been found in terms of inches, or horse-powers, or ohms, or in abstract numbers. In comparing weights the mediating unit must have weight. In comparing values, or economic quantities, the mediating unit must have value. Mr. Kitson clearly recognizes the fact that the substitute for gold must be exchangeable (133), and yet, only two pages later, he totally ignores it.

Still more surprising is the assertion that this ideal, abstract unit is an invariable unit. This assertion is faulty in more than one respect. First: It is not specified in relation to what this unit is claimed to be invariable. The particular effect by which the invariable quality may be recognized is not explained. Since the author repudiates all specific commodity units, he cannot have in mind a composite unit practically agreeing in composition with that of the sum total of all wealth. If it were possible to introduce such a unit, the numerical value of the sum total of all wealth — barring new additions and deductions — would remain constant, however relative values might fluctuate. But even that unit could not be termed invariable in the sense specified, since the composition of the total wealth is subject to constant changes. The concept "invariable unit of purchasing-power" is obviously incapable either of comprehension or of definition. Second: The "invariable unit," being not a concrete quantity, is unable to serve as a value denominator, for a denominator is required only when the exchange-equation takes the form: A = ¾ B. Third: No attempt has been made to prove the assertion. It is therefore only an unsupported assertion, and as such utterly unscientific. Indeed, the opposite may be inferred from the very words of the author; for, if, "with a glut of money, prices advance" (204), there would be every reason to expect a general rise of prices after the introduction of the remedy suggested, when the amount of money can be increased *ad libitum*.

The author describes (152) how the alleged unit may be originally computed and instituted. But he fails to show how it would behave when changes in relative values take place. Suppose that on the day following the adoption of this unit the following exchange relations should be found to prevail: 1 sheep = 21 gallons of wine; 17 bushels of corn = 19 gallons of wine; 11 yards of cloth = 23 bushels of corn. What would be the value of those commodities expressed in terms of the new invariable unit? Can Mr. Kitson give a definite numerical answer to this question? If not, what further information does he need in order to do so? If he cannot answer this, how is it possible that the millions of people composing the market can arrive at a harmonious result? And, if a harmonious result from definite data cannot be expected, by what logic can the system be termed scientific, or the unit invariable?

Had Mr. Kitson consistently adhered to his definition of value, he would have found that the word dollar must be a synonym for a definite quantity of a definite commodity. In place of saying: 1 sheep = 20 units, it would have been equally proper to say that the value of one sheep to one dollar is twenty to one, and, since value is the exchange relationship of two commodities (139), both the sheep and the dollar must be commodities.

It is true, the author seeks to justify the adoption of a no-commodity medium of exchange by quoting the old, but misleading, argument that a sale is only a demi-exchange, or half an exchange. If a complete exchange embraces two commodities, it appears that only one commodity is involved in a demi-exchange. But this word, demi-exchange, like many other confusing words, has been introduced by that class of philosophers of whom Mephistopheles (in Goethe's "Faust") truly says: "For just where fails the comprehension, a word steps promptly in as deputy." The essential feature of an exchange of commodities is the exchange of the rights of ownership, without which a physical exchange of goods would be only a reciprocal loan. Not the physical transfer of possession, but the reciprocal transfer of the rights of ownership constitutes the exchange. In an economic sense an exchange is accomplished when the agreement to make the exchange is definitely concluded, — when the exchange of the rights of ownership is completed. Since a person may be the owner of things which are in the possession of others, things can economically pass from hand to hand without any physical transfer. The exchange of the rights of ownership being completed when a sale is made, a sale is economically a complete exchange even if physically yet unaccomplished.

The assertion that a unit of value can be conceived that shall be independent of a specified amount of a given commodity, or list of commodities, has not been proved.

On a par with the notion that such an independent unit can be conceived is also the idea that money, the instrument of exchange, is not wealth. Only too often is the token mistaken for the money, while in reality the token is only one of the factors that constitute credit-money. When the economic relation between creditor

* Mr. Kitson has done better. He has, in a few instances, actually used the word as defined.

and debtor is carefully analyzed, it is found to be virtually a species of ownership. The creditor has a conditional title to the possessions of the debtor, being the *quasi*-owner of so much of the debtor's possessions as will sell for the sum involved, with the qualification that he can insist on a termination of their joint ownership only after the debt has matured. In this sense credit is equivalent to a right of ownership to wealth which is in possession of the debtor. An evidence of indebtedness, such as a promissory note, can be conceived as a definite economic quantity only if the two following elements are present. First: The extent of the debt must be specified by describing what the debtor must deliver, and when, in order to cancel the debt. An ultimate satisfaction of a debt involves the delivery of commodities; hence the amount, kind, and quality of such must be definitely described. Second: There must be wealth in the possession of the debtor from which, either directly or by exchange, the value specified can be derived, and which, in the event of non-payment, is subject to seizure. The existence of this wealth is an essential factor in the conception of credit, — a factor without which the note cannot be conceived as an exchangeable economic quantity. And this is universally recognized in that the wealth constituting the security of a debt, though remaining in the possession of the debtor, is no longer his unconditional property, so much of it as will cover the debt being virtually owned by the creditor. A promissory note consists not only of the piece of paper on which it is written, but also of all the rights involved; hence the promised value, existing in the possessions of the debtor, is an essential factor thereof.

It is true, the money *token* need not be made of commodities; but the token is not the only factor in the make-up of credit-money. The money substance, in the form of wealth in the hands of the issuer, or, eventually, in the hands of those who are indebted to him, is an essential constituent of credit-money, the paper on which the note is printed being merely an instrument for passing the right of ownership from hand to hand. In credit-money both elements must be present, — *viz.*, a specification of the details of ultimate redemption, and an adequate security consisting of wealth from which the promised value can be derived; otherwise the members of the community will *not* agree to accept the notes from each other in exchange for products. The money unit must, accordingly, be specified in terms of some known valuable thing. But, although a definite promise of ultimate redemption is necessary in a rational money system, redemption *on demand* is not necessary. This is an error of the present system, on account of which issuers are compelled to keep on hand large amounts of gold, which results in that scarcity that is responsible, not only for the unnatural relative appreciation of the unit, but also for the power of money to return interest, which in turn is the source of all the ills which Mr. Kitson has correctly traced to that power.

In many minor respects the author has failed to exercise that care which is essential in a scientific discourse.

Much confusion is introduced by trying to differentiate the meanings of the terms value, purchasing power, and price (119, 204), and subsequently using them indiscriminately as synonyms. As regards the alleged distinctions between the concepts, the definitions are decidedly faulty, being too obscure to be understood. Notwithstanding the denial that value is a property or quality of commodities (204), it is admitted to be an attribute of wealth (224). If values can be expressed in terms of ounces of gold (135), gold thereby becoming a denominator or unit of values, it is difficult to understand why it cannot be a common denominator (223). Readers are apt to get confused if they find that money may in rotation be credit (155), a debt (295), a system of numbers (171), a measure of purchasing-power (202), a denominator of values (161), and yet not a measure of values (359). In mathematics denominator, unit, and measure are synonyms, and any quantity capable of being compared or equated with another (152) is, by virtue of this ability, competent to act as a measure or unit. Moreover, if money is a representative of wealth (224), of value (299), and of commodities (300), then wealth, value, and commodities appear to be synonyms instead of terms for concepts to differentiate which the author has taken such pains. It is difficult to understand how money can be a denominator of value (161), if it is of no value itself (223). A denominator of length must have length, a unit of weight must have weight, and, by all rules of logic, a denominator of value must have value. Indeed, Mr. Kitson recognizes the intimate relationship existing between money and wealth. If money were a system of abstract numbers, why need it be redeemable? Why must its redemption be guaranteed by wealth? Both the assertion that such guarantee is necessary and the demand for freedom to monetize all wealth alike (225) stamp wealth an essential constituent of money.

These discrepancies can undoubtedly be accounted for as follows. Mr. Kitson having correctly traced the most distressing of the prevalent social ills to a restricted currency, and confounding unit of value with basis of currency, he could see no solution save in making the unit of value independent of any specific commodity. In his laudable attempt to present to the world the outline of a solution, he has allowed his enthusiasm to get the better of his sober judgment, and has attempted to convince himself as well as others that the unit of value need not be a specified commodity. He was thus induced to embrace, without adequate scrutiny, those economic doctrines that seemed to serve as a link in the attempted demonstration. Then followed the contest between the adopted erroneous notions and his native common sense, manifesting itself in those numerous contradictions of which only a portion are enumerated in this critique. Indeed, his intuitive convictions were stronger than those erroneous views acquired by his line of argument, preponderating so as to almost obliterate those errors. With a few isolated exceptions, the word value is used as the synonym of exchangeability, when used indefinitely, and of equivalent, when used definitely. So is wealth recognized as a necessary factor, as the raw material, in the production of money.

A careful reconsideration may convince him that it is possible to free the production of money from its present encumbrance without abolishing a specific value denominator and eventual medium of redemption, and that it is possible to monetize practically all wealth and abolish usury, even while retaining the denounced gold-unit. Yes, the money question can be solved without having recourse to the errors which have converted the Science of Common Weal into a most Dismal Science.

HUGO BILGRAM.

A State Socialist's Lie Exposed.

"The Denver Congress" is the heading of an article in the "Arena" for March, in which one R. J. H. writes of the American Federation meeting. His lack of information regarding what really occurred there is something appalling.

His first and most ridiculous error is in imagining an attendance of 2,130 delegates, one for each 500 members. From this he calculates "a membership of at least one million."

At the Denver convention there were just 77 delegates in attendance. Of these, 26 represented non-affiliated local unions and federated assemblies; the balance represented national unions, and were entitled to one vote for every hundred members whom they represented.

R. J. H. then tells us: "On divergent opinions the decisive vote was that cast *for* a legal eight-hour work day, that for the national and municipal ownership of public franchises and mines, that *against* changing land titles to one of occupancy and use only, and that against demanding the collective ownership of the tools and instruments of production. On the land issue the vote for was larger than on the other. The ballot stood 1,217 negative and 913 affirmative."

The reverse is true; 1,217 votes were cast *for* free land, which was offered as a substitute for Plank 10 (the State Socialists' plank), and 913 votes were cast against it. But, to find how and why the delegates voted thus, we must examine the circumstances more closely.

When Plank 10 was reached in the discussion of the programme, one of the delegates said: "I intend to compel the drawer of this resolution to show his colors. . . . I amend section 10 to read as follows: 'The collective ownership by the people of all the means of production and distribution *by confiscation without compensation.*'" The amendment is embraced in the words italicized.

Another delegate moved that a free-land plank be substituted, and several other substitutes were proposed. The various amendments were voted down one after another, until the land substitute was reached. On this 70 delegates voted, — 36 in favor and 34 against. Among the 34 were 8 that opposed State Socialism, 3 of them being among its bitterest opponents. These 8 I am sure of, and there may have been more. Some of them wanted to reach the confiscation amendment and see the discomfiture of the Socialists, and some wanted a distinct yea and nay vote on Plank 10, without having to act on an amendment in the same vote. From this one can readily see that, if Plank 10 had reached a vote, no more than 26 would have favored it, — probably less, — and 44 would have voted against it. Which is a poorer showing for the plank than R. J. H. could have made, even if he had gotten the

figures right. He thinks the land plank was for "the public control of land"; in this he is grossly in error.

The plank reads: "The abolition of the monopoly system of land-holding and the substitution therefor of a title of occupancy and use only." The delegates were told in the course of the debate "that it was the land plank of the philosophic Anarchists."

In summing up, R. J. H. tries to estimate the strength of the various schools, and says "about 1,000 were Socialistic in opinion." There were about 10 in reality, and the individualists numbered about the same.

So much for the "Arena's" opinion of the convention.

Perhaps the reader would also like to know the convention's opinion of the "Arena." It was this, — that it is a "rat" publication and should be boycotted to a standstill. The vote on this was unanimous. Whatever other differences they had, in this the Individualists, Socialists, and "pure and simple" trades unionists all agreed. C.

M. Jean Grave, whom the French amnesty lately released from prison, will publish on May 4 the first number of a new weekly, to be called "Les Temps Nouveaux." Presumably it is intended as a successor to "La Révolte," though it is doubtful whether all the characteristics of the original can be maintained under the present press laws of France. But it is sure to be an interesting publication, numbering among its contributors such men as Octave Mirbeau, Bernard Lazare, Elie and Elisée Reclus, Pierre Kropotkine. Paul Adam, Jean Ajalbert, L. Descaves, Fortuné Henry (brother of Émile), and A. Hamon. Each number will be accompanied by a literary supplement.

I find in one of the leading Paris newspapers ("Le Journal," April 5) a report of the court proceedings in the libel case of Oscar Wilde against the Marquis of Queensberry which contains startling revelations that for some strange reason have not appeared in any American or English newspaper within my knowledge. The report states that Mr. Carson, counsel for the marquis, read in court a letter written by the marquis to his father-in-law, in which this phrase occurs: *Oscar Wilde a montré qu'il était un lâche et le dernier de ces misérables du type de Lord Rosebery.* This, of course, is the Paris journal's French rendering of the passage. I regret that I do not know the original English phrase, and so can give only a retranslation of the French, as follows: "Oscar Wilde has shown himself a coward and the last of those wretches of the type of Lord Rosebery." It is further stated that this letter caused a great sensation in court, which was then intensified by the reading of a second letter in which Lord Rosebery's name is mentioned in a similar connection. Now, the only meaning which under the circumstances can be drawn from the passage quoted is that the Marquis of Queensberry charges the prime minister of England with an offence like that with which he charges Oscar Wilde. At once several questions arise. Why has this most sensational feature of the court proceedings been suppressed in the American newspapers? It is scarcely conceivable that a paper like the New York "World" would not have made the most of such a piece of news. Is it possible that the British government, of which Lord Rosebery is the head, supervised the cable despatches, and that the Paris newspaper got its report by letter? It would seem so; and yet there has now been ample time for a letter to reach this country also. I see no adequate explanation of this mystery. Again: why does not Lord Rosebery bring suit against the Marquis of Queensberry, as Oscar Wilde did? The acquittal of the marquis in the libel case brought by Wilde lends additional strength to any similar charge which he may make against others. Why does not the prime minister clear himself from suspicion? And, if he declines to do so, *why is he not lodged in jail with Oscar Wilde?* It is this last consideration that prompts me to print this paragraph. The private habits of Lord Rosebery and Oscar Wilde are properly no concern of mine or of the public. Their alleged offences are not of an invasive character, and therefore are not rightly punishable by the courts. But when one man charged with this offence occupies a prison cell and another similarly charged occupies the highest official place in England, it is proper that attention should be called to the abominable anomaly. Small wonder that Lord Rosebery has been suffering from serious insomnia lately, if he has been living in fear of this exposure.

It is a very encouraging sign of progress that in military and monarchical Germany hundreds of thinkers, writers, artists, and professors should remonstrate by meetings and petitions against the reactionary and sweeping anti-revolution bill which a Reichstag has been considering, and whose provisions render it a punishable offence to attack religion, monarchy, marriage, the family, the State, or private property "in a manner dangerous to the public peace." This last qualifying clause, if it means anything, means that only dry *savants* will be allowed to handle these subjects, in prosy, unreadable tomes of futile metaphysical discussion, and that pamphleteers, lecturers, speakers, and journalists will be prohibited from referring to them, since their utterances reach the general public and influence conduct. There is even an attempt to do away with the ancient rights of the universities, whose professors have had the fullest freedom of discussion. It is pointed out, logically enough, that it would be absurd to allow students to listen to opinions within university walls which would be criminal outside. The committee seriously considered an amendment making disbelief in God an offence, and only two members, a Liberal and a Social Democrat, opposed it openly. There is a general belief that the government will succeed in passing the bill. If it does, the struggle that will ensue will be a mighty interesting one. The half-crazy emperor has evidently forgotten the lesson of the special anti-Socialist laws which made the Social Democrats such a power in the land.

Mr. Traubel advises William of Germany to "be happy in the rebellion" of the Social-Democratic deputies who refused to cheer him. Let us see: the deputies refused to cheer because it would have been servile and humiliating to cheer a man who is trying to pass a law depriving them of freedom of speech and criticism. Mr. Traubel, then, tells the emperor to be happy in the opposition of his enemies to his scheme of suppression against them. But, if he were happy in their opposition, would there be any opposition? And how can one be happy if he is determined to do the very thing which he finds he cannot do? Verily, as Mr. Traubel says, "there are some things which are not amenable to the mathematics of literalism," and among them is this thing of telling an emperor to be happy in the rebellion of his most intractable subjects. But I am curious to know to the logic or mathematics of what such an observation *is* amenable. I can discover no other meaning in it than this, — that, if one were totally different from what he is, he would have totally different feelings, and rejoice in what may, in his present condition, cause him pain. This is scarcely worth saying in literal and plain language; does it become worth saying in an indirect and poetical way?

London journalists have been trying to convict Count Tolstoi of inconsistency. The count is not a logician, and exact reasoning has not been his strong point, but his complacent critics are hardly better equipped for polemics. It seems that Tolstoi, resenting the application to him of the epithet Anarchist, wrote to the London "Chronicle" a letter explanatory of his position, in which he argued that, since he does not propose to "fight" government, but limits himself to ignoring it in his own life and to advising others to ignore it, it is incorrect to describe him as an Anarchist. This was obviously inept. An Anarchist is one who denies the necessity and legitimacy of government; the question of his methods of attacking it is foreign to the definition. Tolstoi's critics, however, overlooked this point, and, instead of challenging Tolstoi's definition, proceeded to accuse him of inconsistency on the ground that writing and talking against government are merely fighting it with pen and tongue. This is a quibble. Tolstoi's language was not happily chosen when he distinguished between fighting government and ignoring it. The man who calls governments such hard names, and who urges people to repudiate them because they are iniquitous, vicious, and contemptible, cannot be said to "ignore" governments. The real distinction — the distinction which Tolstoi manifestly had in mind — is between fighting *government* by physical weapons and fighting by moral and passive means. A pen may be mightier than the bomb, but it is not a bomb. Tolstoi would not quarrel with governments if they relied on their powers of persuasion alone. He objects to them because they use force, and he disavows the title Anarchist because he imagines that Anarchism is synonymous with force. But there is no difference between bombs and arguments! insists the "Chronicle." "Journalism," it says, "is as earthly as politics." Yes, as earthly, perhaps, at least as now conducted, but it has no force to back it up. Nobody has yet pretended that, because minorities have the liberty of criticising and denouncing majorities, the latter are not the rulers of the former. The right to talk is not the equivalent of the power to act. If it were, majority rule could not exist, and Anarchism would be a condition, and not merely a theory.

Cardinal Gibbons's Ignorance.

If Cardinal Gibbons had but considered the original meaning of the word "wife," he would not have fallen into the error embodied in his statement that "Ancient Greece counted women of elementary education proper material for wives, while clever women of higher education enjoyed the license men accord their mistresses." The word "wife" literally means "woman," nothing else. Among the ancient Greeks the original form of marriage made the mother sole owner of the children. She lived with her kinspeople, and her husband had no authority either over her or over her children. Property descended entirely through the line of female ancestors. Matrimony meant, literally, the status of motherhood, and was highly honorable and dignified long before civilized people thought of such a thing as patrimony.

The father lived in his mother's or sister's or cousin's or aunt's house all his life, visiting the mother of his children when she wished to receive him, — as a guest. His property or earnings all descended to his sisters' children, or to the children of his other female relatives. Women and men were perfect legal equals, and each sex followed what occupation it chose and could succeed in. Women were ecclesiastics, judges, rulers, sovereigns, etc., not only in ancient Greece, but also in ancient Israel (see Old Testament).

After some thousands of years of such customs, man left the house of his mother and cleaved to that of his wife's mother (reference to which is found in "Genesis," ch. 11, verse 24, though the author speaks at a late date, and makes an error in assuming that the first man who took that step left his *father* and mother). But he did not find his position sufficiently independent there to suit him. Leaving the house of his own mother for that of his mother-in-law was out of the frying pan into the fire. Doubtless the bitter jests against the mother-in law, which still point the wit of such comic papers as "Life," "Puck," "Judge," etc., are traces of lingering memory of the undignified position man long had to suffer as a subordinate in his mother-in-law's family. The distinguished missionary, Livingstone, who, in this century, visited a people where the custom is still in vogue, represents the condition of man therein as very humiliating. He is little more than a servant of the household, and has to pay abject deference to both the mother of his children and to his mamma-in-law. If he sits down in the presence of the latter, he has to be very careful not to sprawl his feet out towards her, but to tuck them back respectfully under his chair, in order not to seem to take too free and easy an attitude.

All this, of course, was annoying. So, after a few thousand years of such custom, man made an effort to get the lady of his affections to go off from her people and live alone with him. When such effort failed among the ladies of his own race, sometimes man went off on a raid, stole a beautiful captive from a neighboring race, made her his "wife," and thus became the head of a household of his own. The slave "wife," of course, among strangers whose speech even was unknown to her, was at a great disadvantage. She had no brothers or cousins to take her part, and the poor alien was thus easily subjugated. Thus began the subjection of woman. The children of the slave wife were owned and ruled by their father. They took his name, inherited his property, and paid him allegiance. In such families the same undue prominence was given the eldest son that had, in the other, been given the eldest daughter. In short, patrimony flew to the opposite extreme from matrimony. Gradually such slave mothers as had married rich men lost the love of independence which was natural to women, and in time such mothers voluntarily sold their young daughters to other rich men, and the class of women thus living in ease and comparative idleness, uneducated in the knowledge possessed by free women, corrupted the morals of society, and succeeded in persuading public opinion that marital slavery and ignorance were actually superior to womanly independence and knowledge!

Then a silly world began to condemn such splendid women as Aspasia, Diotima, Corinna, Sappho, and the long line of glorious ancestresses, simply because they had been free wives instead of slave wives. But I wish to call Cardinal Gibbons's attention to the undoubted fact that Greece rose rapidly to its intellectual, artistic, and scientific glory under the *régime* of the free wives, and sank into corruption and decadence under the sway of the slave wives and slave mothers of its later days.

One or two of the fathers of the early Christian Church were men who had sense enough to appreciate the grandeur of character of the educated women of Greece. But the Parkhurst-spirited, narrow, and ignorant fathers of the third and fourth centuries used their utmost endeavor to divide wives into two classes, — respectable and non-respectable. Thus Father Clement, of Alexandria, exhorted the women of his congregation to emulate the knowledge loving, independent, and active women of Greece and other parts of the antique world. He held up to them as a model Telesilla, the poetess, of Greece, who "produced fearlessness of death" in all the women who were her followers. He stimulated them to seek learning by preaching to them of Themisto, a celebrated student of philosophy; of Arete, another distinguished philosopher, whose son was famous as the "Mother-taught"; of Lasthencia and of Axiothea, both of whom studied with Plato, "besides Aspasia, of Miletus, who was trained by Socrates in philosophy and by Pericles in rhetoric," and a host of others.

Not until the third century of our era did such ignorant bigots as Tertullian begin to advocate among Christians the same slavish conditions which had ruined the intellectual youth of Greece, and, ultimately, through these conditions, Christendom fell into the long night of the dark ages. Ignorant and subjected wives and mothers necessarily degrade the race. The process was hastened in Christendom by the fact that such brilliantly educated women as Paula, Marcella, and others (the first of whom helped Jerome to translate the Old Testament into Latin for the use of the Catholic clergy) foolishly went into convents, and persuaded scores of other rich and educated women to do likewise. This left motherhood to the ignorant women, and ignorant women generally fasten superstition, bigotry, and folly upon their offspring before the poor little victims are cut loose from their apron-strings.

Now, we can easily perceive why Cardinal Gibbons is so violent in his denunciations of educated womanhood. He says: "To place woman among men in universities that prescribe education without reference to the heart and soul debases womanhood through developing woman's intellect," (!) and, referring to countries where female infants have been drowned, he says: "Men may be obliged to return to this method, if the advancing New Woman goes to much greater lengths in enforcing her theories on society."

Now, as a friend, I should advise the cardinal to pause right here in his mad career against the "New Woman." The day has gone by when a monk can tear a Hypatia from the pursuit of philosophy and throw her to a rabble of insane monastics to be dragged to a violent death. The "heartful and compassionate" qualities which he eulogizes as "womanly" had very little manifestation under the system which Roman Catholicism persistently fostered for over a thousand years in Europe, — the system of convent-educated, meagrely-educated womanhood. Society will be far wiser to trust itself to the "New Woman" than to the womanhood whose type was Isabella of Castile, an obedient daughter of the Church, an obedient wife and a fond mother (even the tigress can be a fond mother), but an ecclesiastical tool who ruined Spain, broke hundreds of thousands of hearts, and drove millions to despair and premature death.

The policy of Christendom has too long been that of making knowledge a special preserve of the priests, — Catholic and Protestant, — who assume to decide just who may know what is to be known, and how much of it these privileged ones shall know. I believe the time has come to tell the people — the whole people, male and female, young and old — all the facts which priests are trying to cover up and suppress; the chief of which facts is that there is no such thing as "authority" outside of ourselves. Cardinal Gibbons's opinion is Cardinal Gibbons's opinion, as the opinion of Moses or Ezra or Peter or Paul was their opinion, — nothing more. And my opinion is that any man who wants to curb the intellect, to check the freedom of vocation-choosing, to retard the pursuit of knowledge, to gag the lips and bind the hand which seek to publish fullest, freest thought, is a most pestiferous enemy of society, *especially* when his efforts are directed against such development in woman.

There is a certain horrible species of cold-blooded animal which seeks to cover up its own plans and movements by showering forth a black liquid to embarrass those whom it desires to confound. That is precisely the mode which certain clergymen have pursued in seeking to perpetuate the subjugation of womankind. Hurling names, showering insinuations against character, stabbing in the back with innuendo, holding up false models of "womanliness," and crying aloud against the courageous few who dare to reject ecclesiastical models, are favorite tactics with such human cuttle-fish. Of course, they can't help their nature, but we must recognize it, and be on our guard against them. A truly manly man despises these cowardly efforts to limit and bind and curb and regulate woman. Man has made himself a law unto himself, publishing it in his pretended "heavenly" revelations, dogmas, and statutes. Woman is now constructing a law unto herself, and she is putting it forth, not on a pretendedly supernatural, but on a natural, basis. She is thoroughly sick of supernaturalism every time she looks at Spain and Italy, especially at Roman Italy.

Cardinal Gibbons might just as well make up his mind that women are slipping out of the clutches of the priest. And, in so doing, they are, for the first time in the history of the world, becoming truly religious, for they are learning what is religion, — the tie that binds; they have discovered that it is nothing but the common tie of our common humanity, the brotherly and sisterly love of a world-wide family.

ELLEN BATTELLE DIETRICK.

"Freie Menschen in der Liebe und Ehe."

Any new book bearing the above title, "Free People in Love and Marriage," must attract the attention and excite the curiosity of readers of Liberty. We naturally ask: Does it throw any new light on the important subject of the relation of the sexes? does it plead the cause of liberty with convincing force? can it be used for propaganda? If, upon reading the book, it gives us a satisfactory answer upon these three questions, we hail it with joy, as another bulwark behind which we may entrench ourselves, as the struggle for individual freedom waxes hotter. As the book is not accessible to many of Liberty's readers, being written in German, I may be pardoned for offering them my opinion of it.

The author, Mr. Emil F. Ruedebusch, of Mayville, Wis., introduces his expositions with the bold assertion that he has something entirely new to offer on the subject of "free love"; that he has read everything of importance that has so far been written, and is convinced that all these apostles of liberty have not been really free — they are all of them still lingering in the bonds of Christian morality. This is undoubtedly true of much, perhaps the most, of what has been given to the world on that subject. But, if Mr. Ruedebusch had taken the trouble to explore the whole ground that has been gone over, both theoretically and practically, before he made so sweeping a statement, he would find that even he is still lagging somewhat behind the advance guard.

To state Mr. Ruedebusch's position as briefly as possible: he pleads for the utmost liberty in the relations of the sexes, and is a varietist of the extremest type, but that does not prevent him from believing in marriage and the family. His marriage is the permanent union of one man and one woman, who are not only attracted toward each other physically, but who can also be friends and comrades for life. These found a family, and live in a common household on the communistic plan. Both husband and wife are, however, free, — yea, even in duty bound, for the sake of the principle involved, — to follow every outside attraction that comes in their way. Jealousy, among free people, is reasoned out of existence with a *quod erat demonstrandum*. Alas! that we could thus demonstrate away all our weaknesses and absurdities! Mr. Ruedebusch thinks so, and has, according to his own judgment, spoken the last word of science with regard to the sexual relations, enlarging upon his theory all too elaborately, giving advice to the married and the unmarried, the young and the old, while he is buoyed up by a *naïve* enthusiasm and faith in the immediate realization of his dream that would be inspiring if the evident lack of every deeper, psychological insight into human nature and the larger needs of the free in-

dividual, which surpr s sex, and call for, not merely sexual, but also economic and social, freedom, were not r ther depressing. For it is indeed depressing to the sober-minded lover of liberty to see so courageous a plea for the utmost freedom of the sexes as Mr. Ruedebusch's book undeniably presents defeating its own end by a too superficial grasp of the practical problems involved.

Stephen Pearl Andrews, in his "Love, Marriage, and Divorce," approaches the question in quite a different and by far more scholarly way. His definition of sexual purity presents the very issue for the sake of which Mr. Ruedebusch has written his book, although there is not one equally forcible and more incontrovertible statement to be found in it. After giving his definition of sexual purity: "*Sexual purity is that kind of relation, whatever it be, between the sexes which contributes in the highest degree to their mutual health and happiness, taking into account the remote as well as the immediate results,*" Mr. Andrews proceeds to say: "If this definition is accepted, then clearly the whole field is open to new, radical, and scientific investigation, physiological, psychological, and economical, infinitely broader and more thorough than the world has ever yet thought of applying; and he must be a fearful egotist who, in the present stage of our experience, can venture to affirm that he knows the whole truth, the final word of science, on the subject. One thing only is certain, — namely, that absolute freedom, accompanied, too, by the temporary evils of an ignorant use of that freedom, is a *condition precedent* even to furnish the facts upon which to reason safely at all upon the matter. Any settlement of the question by us now would have hardly as much value as a decision made in the heart of Russia upon the best form of human government."

I very much fear that Mr. Ruedebusch is this "fearful egotist," for, in speaking of the marriage of free people, he says (p. 65): "By this union of material interests with his friend, the mother of his children, the man gains a home, the domestic hearth, where he can ever be sure of warm sympathy, of feeling hearts for all his cares and joys." How the woman fares in this arrangement is a matter of entire indifference to him; or, rather, he is entirely unconscious at how great an expense to the woman's individuality the man gains this home, this warm sympathy, etc. In so close a union of two lives as the married state with community of purse and all material interests entails, the more positive of the two natures always dominates the other, — unconsciously and without design though it be, — so as to warp and limit the individuality of the other to a more or less distressing degree. Generally the one so subdued is the woman, while the man, in his capacity as provider, and in his freer contact with the outside world, as generally domineers.

I must not yield to the temptation to go more deeply into this most vital subject, or stop to consider in detail all the fallacies, economical and psychological, in which the book abounds, even if I felt myself quite competent to deal with them. Even the most obvious of its economic fallacies — *viz.*, that Malthusianism would solve the labor question — would not be serious enough to unfit the work for purposes of propaganda, if there were not other graver defects, which in my opinion do so unfit it.

This brings me to my second question: does the book plead the cause of liberty with convincing force? It does not. Less would here have been more. Less zeal to win converts; less attention to and elaboration of details; less puerile anticipation of pleasures to be; a clearer, more powerful statement of first principles; a deeper cut down into the canker-sore of our existing institutions, — would, in my opinion have achieved greater results. Even where it may win converts, — among the young and vigorous, whose senses are convinced even before the intellect has quite grasped the doctrine of liberty, — it is fraught with danger. Its advice to young girls, for instance (p. 141), is almost atrocious in its present possibilities. The free girl is advised to first find other like-minded girls and women to coöperate with her. Then, if they cannot at once find free men for the practical realization of their ideas, they are courageously to tackle the *unfree*, expound their views to them, and invite them to win their love. What superb *naïveté!*

It is a doleful task to point out the weak spots of a book that in its fundamental principles rests so squarely on libertarian ground. Would that Mr. Ruedebusch had set his pot on the back of the stove, and allowed it to simmer for a little while longer! He might have served the public with a far more wholesome and palatable dish. E. H. S.

Fin-de-Siecle Reform.

To the Editor of Liberty:

Permit me to add a word of commendation regarding Mr. Yarros's able article upon "Radicalism at the Woman's Congress" in No. 309. Woman's position in the field of thought during this semi-radical, semi-conservative age is a peculiar one. She desires the roses without coming in contact with the thorns; her emancipators bait their line with the allurements of power to tempt her into the domain of freedom (so they hope), and encourage her to work for herself.

But a false principle can never succeed. Woman suffragists, in their zeal to promote independence among their sex, forget the power that placed them in their present lamentable state. Politics, as some facetious writer has said, is a game that can work both ways; and "what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander." Duplicity in this sense cannot be other than degrading.

It is encouraging, however, to note that discussions among such advocates are invariably of a radical tendency, and of such a nature that the critic is led to believe the adherents of "vote-getting" merely rationalists in disguise. For this cause has also felt the influence of progression. Opinions are freely given now, when they would have been fearfully hushed then. This allows room for the hope that by the time woman receives the right to vote she will be too intelligent to use it, and office-holding be a thing of the past.

The evident inclination of indifferent people to make a "fad" of "woman's rights" is its most fatal opponent. As a young lady once remarked for evident effect: "I do not know much about politics, but presume I shall when we receive the right to vote." It is unjust to place able and intelligent people in the same category as these silly creatures, and incredible that the leaders are as trusting in this respect as their simple-minded followers.

Were it not for occasional flashes of brilliancy and logic, one would be forced to conclude the entire movement as purposeless as the *fin-de-siècle* club would portray it: fortunately for the reputation to be sustained, it is not, but rather a step, we venture to hope, toward the final goal of woman's independence and enfranchisement. Ida Ballou.

Cranky Notions.

The "Twentieth Century" has drifted very far away from sound principles since Pentecost left its editorship. I have a kindly sympathy for those who see the evils of the present social-industrial system and are struggling to right its wrongs; and this sympathy is deepened to pity when I see them wasting splendid efforts in chasing rainbows. The "Twentieth Century" thinks it can displace the present system by a gigantic stock company; in other words, by "colonizing" commerce and industry, thus doing away with competition and interest, which it considers twin evils. I agree with it so far as interest is concerned; but, goodness! can't it see that interest is possible only because of the absence of competition? If the government would allow free competition in banking, — that is to say, in the furnishing of a means of exchange, — interest, as we know it now, would practically be wiped out.

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The talk about abolishing competition is as intelligible to me as if some one talked about abolishing gravity. Even if it were possible, it would not be desirable. Coöperation can do much towards making economies, but it must be voluntary if the highest results are to be attained. This is easy enough to ascertain, if we but compare the compulsory coöperation which governments impose on us and the voluntary societies which surround us on every hand. How many government institutions based upon compulsory coöperation are successful? How many of them are self-supporting and run upon sound business principles? Show us some of them.

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The People's Stock Company is all right enough, and I do not propose to say a word against it as a business enterprise; but, when it holds out the hope of changing a system that is practically universal, — or let us say even national, — it does that which is in all reason visionary indeed. Even if the stock company is formed and successful, — which I hope it will be, — how can it possibly help those who are not members? Will not the same governmental evils exist then for the members as well as non-members? Will the company free the land from those who are not equitably entitled to it? Will it loosen the fangs of the usurer from the throat of commerce by making money free? Will it destroy the monopoly of machinery by destroying the patent system? If it will do none of these things, what interest will reformers have in the company, except it be a place to invest their spare cash, — and, of course, they all have lots of it. But, if it is simply an investment, even the reformer is not averse to making the most of his capital as well as of his labor, and the probability is he will not put either in the People's Stock Company, if the results promised and probable are not as great as, or greater than, in a "capitalistic" concern.

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In my opinion, the friends of the "Twentieth Century" stock company plan would do well to help remove the monopolies of land, money, and machinery as a means of making their stock company a success. With monopoly in these three essentials abolished, they need not fear any evil results from either competition or interest. Jo Labadie.

A Decision that Means Much.

A very important decision comes from the supreme court of Illinois. It is nothing more or less than a decision that eight-hour laws are unconstitutional, being an invasion of the rights of citizens to make contracts. The case before the court was under a law passed by the legislature several years ago and signed by Governor Altgeld, forbidding the employment of women in manufactories for more than eight hours a day and forty-eight hours a week. The court quotes the federal constitution that "no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law," and says that "the privilege of contracting is both a liberty and property right," and that the legislature has no right to interfere with that privilege, except for police or sanitary reasons, which do not apply to this case. — *The Voice.*

If this is so, — and the "Voice" is usually reliable on such things, — it goes farther than the editor of the "Voice" seems to see. Not only labor laws and laws regulating contracts, but all laws which contain any interference with liberty or property, are henceforth unconstitutional in Illinois, "except for police and sanitary regulations"; and apparently a general intention to benefit somebody's health will not be a "sanitary reason," else it might have been argued that the eight-hour law is to help preserve the health of employees from the injurious influence of over-work. This applies to all laws which have been passed since the adoption of the Fourteenth Amendment at least; I suppose it applies also to laws passed earlier.

Doubtless this principle will soon be whittled down, and "police or sanitary reasons" will receive a wonderful extension. But "precedents in law" is Hosea Bigelow's simile for that which clings tighter than a burr, and this decision will always remain a strong weapon in the hands of a lawyer fighting for liberty.

As I write, another thought comes to me, which may be specially commended to the "Voice's" attention. The next great question to be fought out in this country is that of prohibition. The enemies of prohibition, resourceful, influential, wealthy, unscrupulous, seldom fail to take any advantage that is offered to them; and what could be more to their advantage than this decision? The United States supreme court has decided, in the "original package" cases, that the prohibition of the liquor trade is not an exercise of police power. Therefore, unless it can be classed as a sanitary measure, it is unconstitutional, according to the Illinois decision. The liquor men are not likely to play this card at present, for it would wipe out license as well as prohibition, and give us real free liquor, which the liquor trade does not want. But wait till prohibition becomes the burning issue of every State, — it will not be many years, — and see what importance this principle will then take on! Every court that can be bought with the whiskey trust's money, intimidated by a brewer's pull, or influenced by a press fed with liquor advertisements, will be following the Illinois precedent. And, in saying this, I do not mean to deny that there will be a great body of perfectly honest

opinion taking the same ground.

And when they have taken this ground on the liquor question, they cannot, with any show of consistency, refuse to take a parallel ground on many other things. Prophecies are unsafe; but it is a reasonable guess that there is fun ahead!

STEPHEN T. BYINGTON.

Aldermen Are Cheap.

[New York Sun.]

OTTAWA, Nov. 18. — Writs were issued last night against Mayor Aubrey and Alderman Boult of Hull for having obtained certain sums of money corruptly for their influence in connection with the city works. The mayor is charged with having received $4,000. Alderman Boult is said to have received $600.

Anarchist Letter-Writing Corps.

The Secretary wants every reader of Liberty to send in his name for enrolment. Those who do so thereby pledge themselves to write, when possible, a letter every fortnight, on Anarchism or kindred subjects, to the "target" assigned in Liberty for that fortnight, and to notify the secretary promptly in case of any failure to write to a target (which it is hoped will not often occur), or in case of temporary or permanent withdrawal from the work of the Corps. All, whether members or not, are asked to lose no opportunity of informing the secretary of suitable targets. Address, STEPHEN T. BYINGTON, Bordentown, N. J.

Target, section A. — Editor of the "Tribune," New York, N. Y. In its weekly edition of March 13 the "Tribune" had an article by R. G. Horr, one of its staff, replying to a letter from one W. P. M'Intire. M'Intire thinks a paper dollar is redeemed whenever anybody receives it for a dollar's worth of goods, and proposes an issue of notes in these words: "This bill is a full legal tender for all dues and debts, public and private, and is redeemable at par in one dollar's worth of the products of human toil." Horr says in reply that "all paper money must be a promise to pay a certain fixed amount of some substance," that "paper money is good only when the person who issues it will redeem it" by paying the said amount, and that the "measure of value" "must of necessity consist of some definite quantity of the products of human labor." Point out governmentalist errors about money, and show how much better our security would be without government support.*

Section B. — Henry Cohen, 1239 Welton Street, Denver, Col. Send him letters for labor papers, as directed in the last two numbers.

Section C. — Rev. Thomas C. Hall, D.D., 425 North State Street, Chicago, Ill., is described as follows: "A young Presbyterian clergyman of large influence; believes in the temporal duty of the church to social conditions; knows what 'philosophic Anarchy' is, and has no prejudice against it. Thinks we have never seen a 'government by the people' or known what it would be. Believes strongly in social obligations. Is familiar with Spencer." Urge him to take a stand squarely for or against Anarchism and the various special reforms which Anarchism involves.

STEPHEN T. BYINGTON.

* I take the liberty of suggesting that every member of Section A, before writing to the "Tribune," read carefully the long article by Hugo Bilgram in this number of Liberty dealing with the money question, whereby he will discover, if he does not know it already, that Mr. Horr is substantially right so far as he may be judged by the sentences above quoted, and that, under a system of paper money not conforming to his conditions, there would be no meaning whatever in Mr. M'Intire's phrase, "one dollar's worth of the products of human toil." — EDITOR LIBERTY.

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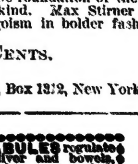

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